

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT	Democratic Republic of Vietnam Maritime Transport Service Directed by Dao Xuan Mai	DATE DISTR.	24 April 1953
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SOURCE:

Maritime Transport Service

1. The maritime service organized by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) has been named Hai Van (Maritime Transport Service). It is composed of about 40 junks, half of which were furnished by the Chinese Communists.
2. The Maritime Transport Service is directed by Dao Xuan Mai; his deputy is Le Tran Nghiep, a member of the DRV National Assembly from Ha Nam Province. The Maritime Transport Service is in reality a semi-official organization, a private service which is supported by the government.
3. The Maritime Transport Service has the salt monopoly in the Van Ly (N 20-07, E 106-17), Quat Lam (N 20-12, E 106-22) and Cho Con areas, presently under DRV control.¹ It distributes salt to private merchants who sell it in the French-controlled zone and bring back products, stipulated by the Maritime Transport Service, to replenish the stores of Interzone IV. The return trip from the French-controlled zone is made by way of a maritime route from Cho Con to Thanh Hoa, a trip which requires one night. At present Mai's headquarters are located at Cho Con.

Dao Xuan Mai

4. Dao Xuan Mai is about 52 years of age, and is originally from Duc Tho, Ha Tinh Province. He was a member of the Nationalist Party (Tan Viet) and later became a member of the Thanh Nien, a party with Communist leanings.² Mai was arrested and imprisoned at Poulo Condore. He was freed from prison in 1939 and later went into the lumber business.
5. With the advent of the Viet Minh in August 1945, Mai was appointed Chief of the Administrative Committee of Nam Dinh Province.³ In early 1946 Mai was named Chief of the Administrative Committee of North Vietnam, replacing Chu

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- 2 -

Dinh Xuong. Mai was known for his competence as well as for his ability to effect rapproachments with non-Communist elements. However, Mai did not have the confidence of the Viet Minh leaders, with whom he was not always in complete agreement.

6. During 1948 and 1949, Mai was at Thai Binh as Director of the DRV Foreign Trade Office, attached to the Economic Bureau of Interzone III. He was then engaged in commerce between Hainan and Thanh Hoa Province, using motorized junks. This business was not successful because of payment difficulties which discouraged Chinese merchants and because of the French blockade. Mai was not engaged in supplying arms during this period.
7. During 1950 Mai was a member of the Administrative Committee of Thanh Hoa Province without having any specific functions.

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2. [] Comment. Mai was probably acquainted with Nguyen Duc Quynh who together with Ton Quang Phiet, Nguyen Kiem Huy and others, formed a group of political moderates which is now defunct.

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